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Circular No. 19 – State and Local Vital Records

Birth Records

The first attempt of the Michigan legislature to create a state-wide compulsory system for the recording of important information relating to births and other vital data was made in 1867 as Public Act 194. This law required the township supervisors to collect facts pertaining to all births that occurred in their jurisdictions, noting date, name of individual, gender, race, place of birth, and the names, birthplaces, occupations, and residences of the parents. By authority of Act 343 of 1925, responsibility for maintaining these statistics was transferred from the Secretary of State to the Department of Public Health. In 1996, the Department of Public Health was combined with two other state departments to form the Department of Community Health. This department still maintains control of vital records. In 1978, by authority of Public Act 368, the legislature restricted access to all birth registers and indexes. Anyone wishing to obtain birth certificates (or any other vital record) should contact the Vital Statistics Section, Department of Community Health, 201 Townsend Street, Capitol View Building, 3rd Floor, Lansing MI 48913, (517) 373-3740.

| Area Covered | Record Group | Type | Dates |
|-------------------|--------------|-------|-----------|
| State of Michigan | 86-10 | Index | 1867-1872 |

Death Records

In 1867 (Public Act 194) the Michigan legislature passed a law requiring township supervisors to collect data on the deaths occurring within their jurisdictions. The statute mandated that certain facts be entered on forms provided by the Secretary of State, with return thereof to Lansing via the county clerks. The information to be recorded was name of deceased, date and place of death, gender, race, marital status, age, nativity, cause of death, plus names and occupations of parents. In 1925, by authority of Act 343, the duties of the Secretary of State concerning the registration of deaths were transferred to the Department of Public Health. The Department of Community Health inherited them upon its creation in 1996.

| Area Covered | Record Group | Type | Dates | Microfilm Reel |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Crawford County | 80-124 | Register | 1878-1959 | 2151 |
| Dearborn Township | 71-157 | Register | 1897-1938 | |
| Fort Gratiot Township | 80-128 | Register | 1946-1949 | |
| Grand Traverse County | 80-123 | Index | 1867-1960 | 2127 |
| Grand Traverse County | | Register | 1867-1916 | 2128 |
| Green Oak Township | 68-34 | Register | 1897-1952 | |
| Ionia County | 79-51 | Index | 1885-1925 | |
| Lansing City | 80-5 | Register | 1897-1905 | |
| Lansing City | 87-48 | Register | 1913-1916 | |
| Livingston County | 78-68 | Index | 1895-1948 | |
| Manitou County | 75-70 | Register | 1871-1893 | |



Death Records - Continued

| Area Covered | Record Group | Type | Dates | Microfilm Reel |
|-------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Manitou County | 92-434 | Index | 1867-1914 | 7693-7714 (new) |
| Missaukee County | 80-121 | Register | 1870-1934 | 2133 |
| Otsego County* | 75-4 | Register | 1875-1934 | 1103 |
| State of Michigan | 86-28 | Index | 1867-1914 | 5963-5975 (old) |
| State of Michigan | 92-434 | Index | 1867-1914 | 7693-7714 |
| State of Michigan | 2004-15 | Records | 1867-1897 | 11489-11524 |

*Records restricted due to the inclusion of birth information.

Marriage Records

In 1867 the state legislature passed Act 194 requiring every justice of the peace, minister of the gospel, and all other persons authorized to solemnize marriages in Michigan to make note of each marriage performed by them and to deliver to the clerk of the county in which such marriage took place documentary evidence that the ceremony had occurred. Information to be recorded was date, names of the parties involved, their age, race, residence, birth place, occupation, number of times previously married, place of marriage, the couple's parents' names, the name of the presiding official, plus the names and residences of the witnesses. These facts were to be recorded by the receiving county clerk and then forwarded to the Secretary of State. In 1921, by virtue of Public Act 170, the duties of the Secretary of State with respect to marriage records were transferred to the Department of Public Health. The Department of Community Health inherited them upon its creation in 1996.

| Area Covered | Record Group | Type | Dates | Microfilm Reel |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Crawford County | 80-124 | Register | 1878-1974 | 2152 |
| Dearborn City | 83-68 | Register | 1881-1883 | |
| Grand Traverse County | 80-123 | Index | 1853-1960 | 2129 |
| Grand Traverse County | | Register | 1853-1933 | 2130-2131 |
| Manitou County | 75-70 | Register | 1868-1895 | |
| Missaukee County | 80-121 | Register | 1887-1937 | 2134 |
| Otsego County | 75-4 | Register | 1875-1969 | 1103-1104 |
| State of Michigan | 86-10 | Index | 1867-1871 | |
| State of Michigan | 86-28 | Index | 1867-1921 | 5940-5961 (old) |
| State of Michigan | 92-45 | Index | 1867-1921 | 7715-7766 (new) |
| State of Michigan | 94-68 | Index | 1950-1969 | 7767-7819 (grooms only) |
| State of Michigan | 94-450 | Records | 1867-1925 | 9221-9407 |

Divorce Records

The Michigan legislature, under authority of Act 9 of 1897, required all circuit court clerks to notify the Secretary of State of all petitions for divorce filed in their respective counties. These reports were to include the names and ages of the parties involved, names and ages of all children in the family, date and place of petition for divorce, and county where the marriage was performed. In 1923 (Public Act 27) the law was changed, directing the circuit court clerks to submit their reports to the Department of Public Health. The Department of Public Health merged with two other departments to form the Department of Community Health in 1996. Divorce records still reside within the Department of Community Health.

| Area Covered | Record Group | Type | Dates | Microfilm Reel |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Kent County | 86-28 | Index | 1896-1923 | 5962 |
| Hillsdale County | 85-10 | Decrees | 1874-1942 | |
| Ingham County | 80-109 | Decrees | 1874-1918 | |
| Ingham County | 80-109 | Proceedings | 1888-1927 | |
| Ingham County | 89-284 | Decrees | 1912-1949 | |
| Ingham County | 89-284 | Proceedings | 1904-1950 | |
| Muskegon County | 84-31 | Proceedings | 1894-1947 | |
| State of Michigan | 92-439 | Index | 1897-1923 | 7820-7822 |
| State of Michigan | 94-259 | Index | 1924-1977 | 7823-7842 |
| State of Michigan | 94-449 | Records | 1897-1923 | 7843-7864 |